Re Weisberg

4/7/71

Dear Dick,

If you had written me when you "rushed out" to buy FRAME-UP, I'd have been saved the trouble of packaging it and taking it to the post office and the cost of postage and insurance. In fact, if at any time during the past three years, since they renumbered our rural routes and I notified everyone, you had changed your record of my address, your 4/1 might have reached me in time to save this needless burden. When one has many, slight ones assume importances they otherwise would not have. You may return the book I sent you.

The other things in your letter are quite interesting. I have had a different interest than you in the sketch, and I have not lost it. There was more in the draft of the book, but I'm satisfied it is among the things that space alone required editing out. Nor is it alone what as you now know Newcomb first discovered in it (and I gave the FBI). For the moment, with the irresponsibility with which some of these things managed to get treated, I'm keeping the reason entirely to myself. However, I suggest that you reread what you wrote and see if you can escape the captivity of your preconception and imagine if it could be other than an alleged connection with the JFK assassination that could have so surprised Hale. Which is not to say that this alone would not have and should not have.

Did you get from Hale any kind of identification of the three women he said had seen Ray and Raoul together. Many people must have, in different places? Did you get any kind of description of Raoul? I also have no doubt that there is a "Raoul". Nor is there any doubt that most of what Ray told Hale if correct. He merely conned Hale into heed the irrelevant and missing the relevant. Of the latter, Hale had to have been aware. I'd appreciate copies of your and Trents' notes on your meetings with Hale. I'd heard of them at the time, but no more.

I will ask Bud for the tape transcript. But having made a study of his writing nobody else has and having been with him when he lost his cool, I'd also like to hear it, if you can spare a dub. It is unfortunate that there is so little collaboration when there can be. At that time, this information could have meant other things if I'd had it. If you did not know I had written part of a book and was rushing ahead, Trent did. But even the clippings from Canada, intended for all of us, I was never told about, save by the man who gave them for this purpose. After the book is published, when all I do on this comes from other writing I should be doing, is hardly the most useful time. And suppose I'd had that to include in the book? With what I had on Hale, not by any means all of which is in the book, can you imagine how helpful it could have been?

Dick, whether you believe me or not, your strong and inflexible preconceptions color everything. Let me give you an example: After Fensmen showed Ray the pictures and the sketch "He said Ray would not identify Frenchy as Raoul". Suppose he could not, how would you have put it? And how do you know he could and would not? I'm not going to make any further effort to argue with you about either the sketch or the pictures or the "identification", if there is any, of any of the men in the picture, but you are so set in this you can't really think about it, and what might be true that you might detect you will not be able to.

Let me propose a simple thing to you. I have told you that I now know more about the sketch, including its origins, and that I'm not going to tell you what it is. Why don't you tell me what you know about it, including the date of origin, and I will tell you if that is correct, or if any part of it is. This is separate from the striking resemblances in the picture.

Also, please understand that I am not saying there is no significance in either the sketch or the resemblance, but I am suggesting that you are so much the captive of a preconception the number of variations of which I do not believe you now recall, each of which you aregued with equal fervor, that you are incapable of seeing anything else. Including what might be more important and make what there can be in the essence of your agrument much better than you have or can. Your formulation cannot survive except in your own mind.

You can't be right about the sketch and pictures turning Foreman around, for he never went in but the one direction. There is no indication he ever intended other than he wound up doing. He as never conducted any investigation. He never intended to. The obvious things he could have done with no more than a letter or a phone call he didn't do. Hale did turn around, but again, not because of the sketch, etc. What choice did he have? He got nothing of any value from Ray. He got nothing of any value on his own. He did no work in Memphis. I got enough for a book there in a week, and it was by far the easiest work of that kind I've ever done, like ripe fruit dropping into the habd. And he was latched to a contract. He had to bullshit it through. But even here you misread it. He has not said there absolutely was no conspiracy. Quite the contrary. Remember my line about a little conspiracy being like a little pregnancy? He built what he can try and use as an escape hatch.

Your opinion that Foreman and Hale both know "the truth about both assassination" I cannot credit. Nor could this combination of sketch and pictures do it, nor could Clark. What makes you think Hoover saw either? Or that anybody who might know trusted Clark with the knowledge? It may be beyond your willingness to believe, but Hoover hates Clark even more than Clark hates him, with a blind passion. And when he hates, he reaches new heights. He wouldn't even talk to Bobby for the last six months of Bobby's tenure as A.G., and Bobby was his boss.

You ask, "You else can you explain what Foreman said and did when he showed Ray those photos"? It would be helpful, if you intend an answer, to tell me a) what Foreman said and did; b) how you know; and c) when it happened. What do you have on this aside from strong desire to believe what you think?

Now I believe you when you say Hale was frightened out of his skin. It is partly this part that I am anxious to hear. I want to get his reactions to specific things for myself. His reaction is, in my opinion, other than as you describe it, "abnormal". I can think of quite normal reasons for that reaction, one being the loss of his reputation (having nothing to d with sketch or pix), another is the loss of many $$$$$$, another the certainty his book would bomb and the feeling he had to write it, which had to gall him. Want more? Well, instead of this great loss, he expected a greater profit. Foreman estimated his share beginning with about a half million. Need more than that? I agree that Foreman did a completely abnormal thing. If you didn't have your eyes peeled for proof of the impossible, you'd realize that I made a great and lebaorate point of precisely this.

- From this you spring to the entirely unsupported allegation that Foreman was frightened. You do not even present any conjecture on this. You say Hale was, and from this you take for granted that if Hale was scared and for the reason you want believed, therefore, Foreman also was scared and for the same reason. What evidence do you have that Foreman was scared, regardless of whatever he was scared of? And then tell me what he was scared of and why? From my knowledge of his entire career, I know of only one occasion he was scared, and I have an eyewitness account. It was very recent. It was 3/17/71.

Where you go from here I shudder to think of addressing, but I'd not be your friend if I didn't try: And remember, you have created unproven reasons for Hale's fright and no evidence at all of Foreman's: "The only power strong enough to scare both of them that much is the same power that ruined Garrison and that has controlled the news media on this subject through the years." To take the easier part first, the news media needed no controlling. They did it spontaneously. They didn't have to be controlled, any more than they did on the Bay of Pigs. Moreover, the New York Times wtice made its own efforts, thwarted by incompetence from within (plus a bit of sabotage by two of the crew on the second one) and the FBI's telling everyone to keep quiet.

Now I regret to tell the ~~skuk~~ unbelieving and the unwilling to believe that the power that ruined Garrison was Garrison. Nobody needed to lift a finger to thwart him. He needed no help. There is no reason to believe Boxley ever had any connection with the CIA, that he was other than sick, and I was there, very much there, as Bud can tell you, when Jim made up the claim that Box was a top CIA man sent to penetrate him. That was Jim's way of saving his own face, a normal desire. As far as Bethell is concerned, beginning a year and a half earlier, for entirely different reasons, I tried to warn Jim against him, and so did some of his staff. He just wouldn't listen. He has that unique genius that renders fact irrelevant. More, I knew before the trial began that he had to lose and the reasons were so clear I predicted them to the lawyers the Sunday before the jury selection began. Their method of handling the case and their doctrine guaranteed it. You have no idea how much I did to help prepare that case and what I was able to arrange by way of help in Dallas, with technical experts, etc. I'll never recapture what that period beginning 1-/68 cost me, in money or in health. I was in N.O. and left. I refused to stay there for the trial and refused to return except under specified conditions. Bud can confirm all of this to you. He was there and was among those who didn't believe I meant it. I'm not making any of this up. It is, in fact, considerably understated. Even worse is true in other areas. What they had they didn't know and didn't know how to use. You haven't the remotest idea of what Jim blew. All of you nice, pleasant, soft-speaking guys went down there and fed him what you sincerely believed but what was plain shit, then he got to embroidering on that, feeding it back to you, you all took it as gospel and started enlarging on what you believed he had proven when it was non-existent, and soon there was no end other than tragedy. Did it ever occur to any of you that he should have been investigating in New Orleans, and that he did nothing there? Didn't this occur to you even after the disaster? So far as I know, I did the only real investigating in New Orleans. He never ever asked for the TV footage. I got it, and when I asked Moo to get the stills, which they never did, and told him how, they turned this over to Turner, who got a very poor duplication of what I already had-but not one of the missing stills. Even after Russo's testimony, they never asked the papers for the pictures of the wharf dedication. I got that,too, with no sweat.

It got so bad, I had to stop giving Jim anything because he never respected anybody's rights and would immediately wholesale anything he got. That was morally wrong enough, but the real trouble was it always got into the wrong hands and inevitably lost its value. It ought be obvious that with that nonstop blabbing it always got back to the wrong people, who then had no problem knowing what they had to defend against. Even when I went to much trouble and in one case some danger to get things for them and gave it to other than him, other than Bethell, with the strictest (and agreed to) injunctions against anybody seeing it, Jim, personally, gave the one copy away, and it was but the shortest time before the wrong people, those involved, were feeding it back to me.

Working this way, one couldn't even take the subway!

And now he is a dog in the manger. If you don't believe me, ask Bud. I still think Jim is one of the most personable men I've ever met, with one of the best minds, and without doubt is one of the country's best writers. But I don't like to kid myself, and what I saw and lived through is quite real. I live no fictions and I seek none.

I had heavy mail today. I respond to your letter first, realizing it is undoubtedly a futility, in an effort to get through to you, to keep you from living a futility on this, so that you might at least ask yourself a few questions and be on this subject as stable and mature as you are on others. There is nothing in the past to encourage me, there is nothing in it for me if I succeed, so I do hope you will at least do some soul-searching and begin to apply to this subject what you apply to the other interests in your life. At some point, because you have the intelligence you do, there will come a realization, and the later it comes the harder it will be. At some point you will realize that you have been paving roads to hell, as I wrote Berkeley, and you will not be happy.

If you take offense, I'm sorry. I do not intend it. But if you do not escape the dream world you have created, great pain awaits you, and that I would, to the degree possible, seek to avoid.

What you suggest has considerable potential value, if it lies other than where you think. I am very glad to know about it, even if too late for the best use. Perhaps we can still accomplish something with it.

I have at several points invoked Bud's name, his witness to what he saw and heard. I'll give him a copy.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg